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Remarks

Claims 1-12 and 19-21 were pending in the application. Claims 1, 2, and 5-12 were rejected. Claims 13-18 were withdrawn. Claims 3, 4, and 19-21 were merely objected to and no claims were allowed. By the foregoing amendment, claims 13-18 are canceled, no claims are amended, and no claims are added. No new matter is presented.

Allowable Subject Matter

Applicants appreciate the indication of allowable subject matter in claims 3, 5, and 19-21.

Interview Summary

Applicants appreciate the courtesy of a telephonic interview between the undersigned and the examiner on March 7, 2006. The propriety of the Lombard/Hackstie et al. combination was discussed. The undersigned submitted that there was no indication one of ordinary skill in the art would select the primitive configuration of Lombard as a starting point. Furthermore, there is no indication that one of ordinary skill in the art even if presented with Lombard, would find a particular fault therewith for which Hackstie et al. would suggest the cure. This is expanded upon in the substantive discussion below. The undersigned further submitted that given the configuration of Lombard there was no suggestion that there would be the claimed precompression force.

The examiner indicated possible reconsideration of the allowability of claim 3 and the rejection of claim 6. The undersigned indicated that this could be addressed in a response to a further Office action. No agreement was reached.

Claims Rejections-35 U.S.C. 103

Claims 1, 2, 6, 7, [8], 9, [10], 11, and 12 were rejected under 35 U.S.C 103(a) as being unpatentable over Lombard (CA534694) in view of Hackstie et al. (US5161951). The claim 8 and 10 elements were asserted as involving mere design considerations over the combination. Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection.

The Office action identified elements 27 and 28 of Lombard as a retainer segment. Lombard element 28 is "an annular member". Col. 3, line 51. Lombard element 27 is a "ring

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nut". Col. 3, line 50. Because both are thus full, uninterrupted, annuli, neither is a "segment". As is discussed in further detail below, Lombard alone or in combination with Hackstie et al. fails to suggest this claimed configuration.

Elements 16, 24, and 30 of Hackstie et al. were asserted as a full annulus rebate, a segmented retainer, and a collar, respectively. However, the subject elements relate to retention of a dummy disk 9 which is shrink fit onto a shaft 8. Col. 3, lines 8 & 9. This does not relate to precompression of a rotor stack. Furthermore, item 30 is clearly identified as a closure piece that fits into a slot. Col. 4, lines 12 & 13. FIGS. 7 and 8 clearly show this to be a single small segment circumferentially coextensive with the locking retainer 24. Thus, it is not an annular collar as in claim 3. (see "full annulus retaining ring 220..." in paragraph 0034/0032 of the PG Pub/application).

It was asserted as obvious "to modify the retainer of Lombard by including a shaft rebate, collar, and retainer segments as taught by Hackstie in order better secure the rotor stack on the shaft." This is a mere conclusion without support in the art. There is no indication that Lombard required such modification. As noted above, due to the insufficiencies of Lombard and Hackstie et al., even if there were suggestion to combine, the combination would fail to yield the claimed invention. Furthermore, general engineering considerations would not suggest this particular combination. For example, there has been no demonstration that one of ordinary skill in the art would choose this combination rather than pinning the Lombard nut against circumferential movement. Even if an associated pin were treated as a retainer, it would not be the claim 1 retainer which transmits a precompression force.

Regarding claim 8, the Office action had the mere conclusory assertion that providing the identified divergence would have been obvious. The art fails to suggest the basic rebate of claim 6. Nevertheless, the claim is believed patentable for the same reasons as the base claim and intervening claim 6.

Regarding claim 10, the Office action had the mere conclusory assertion that it would have been obvious "to adjust the precompression force based on the specific size of the rotor stack..." Office action, paragraph 13. However, there is no indication that this is an appropriate compression force for the Lombard stack. The Lombard stack features splined interconnection between the disk central apertures and the shaft (see elements 11 and 18). This provides a


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mechanical linkage that may reduce the requirements of precompression. Furthermore, the backwardly angled configuration of the first disk web 13A of Lombard clearly limits the possible range of forces. There is no evidence that any size consideration would bring the Lombard configuration within the claimed range.

Claim 5 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Lombard in view of Hackstie et al. and the engineering expedient of using "whatever number of retainers necessary..." Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection. As noted above, there is no suggestion to use the segmented retainer at all. Thus, there would be no suggestion to select the two-piece configuration.

Accordingly, Applicant submits that claims 1-12 and 19-21 are in condition for allowance. Please charge any fees or deficiency or credit any overpayment to our Deposit Account of record.

Respectfully submitted,

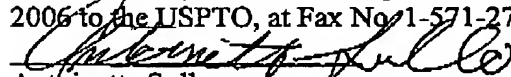
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I hereby certify that this correspondence is being facsimile transmitted this 8th day of March, 2006 to the USPTO, at Fax No. 1-571-273-8300.


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